

~~Folk~~
~~Stories~~ of Foothill and Mountain
~~_____~~ Tall tales & true.

George McDougall had another son who, in his own way, was as famous as either his father or brother. Dave McDougall was known far and wide as a trader, but possibly he was even better known as a yarn-spinner. Dave's stories are ^{gospel truth} ~~known~~ over the length and breadth of Alberta, and have taken their place as part of the permanent folk history of the Province.

Like most good yarn-spinners, Dave borrowed the sources of many of his tales from other ~~xxxx~~ regions, or from the classics of the tall-tale. This doesn't make ^{his yarn} ~~them~~ any less indigeneous to Alberta, however, since Dave gave the tales his own particular twists in keeping with the geography and the climate.

The best known tall-tale in Alberta is the one Dave used to tell about the Chinook. There had been a big snowfall--one of the biggest in history. The snow was so deep that it covered all of Morley church except the tip of the steeple. The Indians would come to church, tie their horses to the steeple, go down through a snow tunnel to the door of the church, and so inside.

One day, during the big snow, Dave had to go to Calgary. He harnessed his horse, hitched him to the sleigh and set out. When he was about half-way to Calgary he heard a rustling noise behind him. He knew what it was: it was a Chinook stealing through the Mountain passed. He whipped up the horse, but the faster he went the harder blew the Chinook, and the faster melted the snow! "It was all I could do," Dave used to say, "to keep the front runners on the snow! ~~xxx~~ And my little dog swimmin' along behind!"

The Indians in the church had a bad shock when they came

For Tall Tales
check this
file

200

bullet tel
no 22me

~~XXX XXXXX~~ & ~~XX XXXX~~ ~~XXXXXX~~

watching

there were a lot of trees. Suddenly the mules played out.

The wagon started to roll back, but the quick-thinking mules grabbed hold of the trees with their teeth and saved the day!

Dave said that when the CPR was building, the railroad men followed the tracks of his old Red River Carts across the prairie.

Spore But Dave was not the only ^{pioneer} ~~one~~ who had remarkable experiences.

fellow A pioneer named Redgrave had a pet beaver. The beaver was trained to cut all Redgrave's wood. The beaver was such a fast woodcutter, and ~~at~~ so neat a stacker, that Redgrave was able to hire him out to the neighbors. One day Redgrave went away on a short visit and left the beaver locked in the cabin. The beaver cooked and ate his supper, but somehow he had never been trained to shut off the water. When Redgrave returned the beaver was dead. He had drowned.

*Here
three
to
myself*

X

In the mountains, too, the natives have a neat way of catching Grizzley bears. They will bore a hole in a tree trunk, fill the hole with honey, and from a limb sticking out above the hole they will tie a stout rope. To the rope they will tie a large rock, so that the rock is hanging close to the honey-filled hole. After a while a Grizzley will come along. He is hungry and smells the honey. He gives the rock a little push with his paw and it swings back and hits him a little tap. This annoys the bear and he gives it a harder push. He receives a harder tap. He is really annoyed now, and gives the rock a still harder push. He receives a severe smack. The bear is fighting mad. He gives the rock a terrific push---and it swings back and bats his brains out. The natives then hurry over and carry the bear away.

arrived when venison would grace the citizen's table. ^{On} The appointed morning the deer appeared as usual. The citizen went out with his hammer. He lifted it, swung down a terrific blow. Very gracefully the deer turned his head, and the ~~xxxx~~ man broke his own leg. In the hospital he swore never to molest a deer again.

~~xxx~~
Animals figure in most of the mountain tales. There's the yarn about the prospector who, in 1873, was travelling through the mountains. One night he unpacked his four pack-horses and his saddle ~~mare~~ and hobbled them in a meadow. He enjoyed a good supper of spuds and trout. (Where he got the spuds, ~~no~~one knows)

In the middle of the night he was awakened by a blood-curdling roar. He jumped out of his blankets and saw two fierce eyes staring at him. Of course the prospector wasn't afraid. He knew the eyes belonged to a big Grizzley, but he got his lasso and roped her. She dragged him many miles up and down the mountains before he got her broke to ride. When he rode the bear back to camp he found that another Grizzley and her cubs had eaten all his grub except some prunes. His saddle was still there, and also his rifle.

It was getting light by that time, so he went out after his horses. The bears had eaten all the horses, so he saddled up the Grizzley he had roped and started on his way. That afternoon he saw several Elk playing on a peak. He needed meat, but on looking for his bullets he found they had disappeared. With amazing intelligence he chewed on a prune and loaded the seed into his muzzle-loader. He hit a young bull Elk in the neck, killing him on the spot.

That night the prospector and his trained Grizzley
had a delicious feed. The meat was flavored like prunes."

~~xxxxxxxxxx~~

ranching
The foothills folk also have their tall-tales. I heard
a mighty story about a high wind. One old-timer said that
"one day when ~~they were~~ we were on the round-up a heck of a
wind started to blow. I knew it was going to be a humdinger, so
I picked out the biggest beef I could find and slung it back of
my saddle to hold down the horse and keep us from being blowed
away. The other boys saw what I was doing and they did the same.
The wind blew so cold, and so hard and so long that all of us
got the pneumonia, and all them other fellers kicked off till
I was left alone.

" The wind blew for days, but me and the horse and that
beef stuck together. Barns, houses, chickens, fences and all
kinds of things kept blowing past us, but the funniest thing
of all was an old feller asetting in a rocking chair, sailing
along through the air. As he came nigh me he yelled for a match
to light his pipe. By the time I'd dug through three inches of
dirt in my jeans he was out of sight. Pretty soon a telephone
came blowing by, so I grabbed it and told the operator in the
next township that that an old feller in a rocking chair was
heading that way, and would she see to it that somebody had a
light ready for his pipe.

" The storm finally blew itself out, so I dumped off the
steer and rounded up the ten thousand head of cattle that had
drifted for more'n a hundred mile. When I got 'em home to
the ranch I saw a big hat lying on the ground, so I picked it
up. Under it was my old friend, still in his rocking chair and
puffing away at his pipe. " Ah," I said, " so you got a match?"

hind feet in the air. The farmer merely took out his lawn mower, cut himself ten bushels of frog-legs to the acre and lived lusciously until spring!"

At Rocky Mountain House they had what was probably the most industrious beaver in history. This fellow worked so hard and so long that an American who was settling around Rocky feared the beaver would cut down every last tree on the place. So, with true American ingenuity the settler solved the whole problem. He simply lighted a lantern and hung it out ~~xxxxxxx~~ on a tree, thinking that this light would frighten ~~XXX XXXXXX~~ Mr. Beaver away. When the settler went out next morning he got a terrible shock. The lantern light was just what the beaver needed. With the added illumination he had cut twice as many trees!

In conclusion there's the famous Jasper high jump. An old settler calmly walking along a trail was suddenly confronted by a huge grizzly. Thinking of nothing better to do the settler let out a whoop and began to run---the other way. The bear ran too. In the same direction. The settler thought he was done for, but away down ahead of him he saw a lone tree with a branch sticking out. The branch was over thirty feet from the ground. The bear was gaining at every jump, but the settler put on a final desperate burst of speed and jumped for that limb.

"Did you catch it?" asked his friends.

"I sure did," replied the settler. "Caught 'er on the way down!"

24

used it in many ways but the most common was to use it as a

But if people remember the Red River Cart, they are apt to forget that the thing that gave Edmonton its first real start was the rush to the Klondyke in 1897-98. During this period the city increased in size from a few hundreds to several thousand.

Edmonton was the jumping off place for the gold seekers who were so unfortunate as to choose the overland route to the Klondyke. They came from every part of the world, and many, unused to the travel of the north, brought with them fantastic devices for making the long trip in quick time.

One of the most ingenious was Texas Smith. He arranged three barrels tricycle-wise, fixed shafts to the barrels and hitched ~~xxxxxxx~~ up a horse. Inside the barrels he carried all his supplies. Texas got about seven miles before the hoops came off the barrels, and he traced his way ^{back to Edmonton by} ~~xxxxxxx~~ following the track of beans, rice and flour.

In a shed near the river bank, Brenneau Fabian was preparing for

the journey. "Noah's Ark", the people called his invention. It was a large vessel, large enough to hold a score of men. Made entirely of galvanized iron, the ship was hinged in the middle so that the stern could be folded over the bow and the whole pulled along on either wheels or runners - a streamlined version of the covered wagon. A team of oxen was to be the motive power on land and sails on the water. The Juggernaut did not leave its place on the river bank. For many years, ~~after~~ "Fabian's Folly" was an outstanding float in all parades in Edmonton.

a long while
Another party spent ~~several winters~~ constructing an ice boat. Since the group expected to do a little profiteering when they reached the gold fields, space had to be allowed for cargo. Gingerly, the heavy contraption was tugged out onto the ice. The towering mast was hoisted and the expanse of sails set. The boat bade fair to become part of the ice. It would have taken a hurricane to move it. The grinning citizens rounded up fourteen teams of horses to haul the monstrosity back up the grade to the shed from which it emerged with such eclat.

The prime folly was that of the "I Will Steam Sleigh Company" of Chicago. This firm manufactured a single piece of equipment. This was a steam sleigh to haul a train of four cabooses on runners. Powered with a boiler and a marine engine, traction was provided by studding the cylindrical wheels of the engine with spikes or teeth. The first car behind the engine carried fuel, the second was the living quarters of the crew, and the third carried provisions. The date for the start arrived. The crew strode about oiling and wiping and testing gauges. "Let her go!" cried the leader. With ~~the~~ *the* blast of a four-funnel liner, the sleigh lurched forward. The

wheels churned, showering the spectators with clods of earth. The tractor wallowed and settled in the mire. All the frantic efforts to extricate her failed. The "I Will" wilted. Years later an enterprising saw mill ^{man} bought the machinery for his mill. ~~all~~
~~Klondike~~